

# SOARing

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NEWS FROM THE SOAR INSTITUTE

ISSUE 11

## *Habits of Mind: Making the Invisible Visible*

*Fostering Habits of Mind in Today's Students*, a book written by Jennifer Fletcher, Adela Najarro, and Hetty Yelland and published in 2015, provides a new approach to developmental education. Habits of mind are defined as "a fundamental set of behaviors for thoughtful teaching and learning," "ways of approaching learning that are both intellectual and practical," or "an internalized set of practices essential to critical thinking." Examples of these habits are curiosity, openness, engagement, creativity, persistence, motivation, confidence, responsibility, flexibility, and metacognition. Our challenges as faculty and staff are **to make invisible practices visible**, discussable, coachable, and available for students to reflect upon and access. We must show how they contribute to deep and transferable learning.

Insightful quotations from the book reflect many of the challenges expressed by those working with today's students. Below are passages from the authors that provide valuable food for thought:

- "Many of our students have math or writing anxiety. Most are surprised by the amount of studying required outside of class. Few have regular routines or dedicated spaces for academic work. These are not 'deficits' our students bring to college; they are data for making instructional decisions."
- "For students in developmental classes, these habits of mind are critical; without a sense of intellectual curiosity, motivation, and confidence many learners disengage from academic culture before they have even started their college-level course work."
- "By showing our students how qualities of mind such as persistence and flexibility aid us in our disciplinary work, we make visible the link between intellectual process and academic product."
- "It is not enough to create incidental opportunities for curiosity and engagement; we need to direct students' attention to how an ongoing practice of curiosity and engagement can affect their mind-set."
- "The fact that even academically proficient students have trouble continuing in college suggests that college readiness encompasses more than just academic skills. College success is not only about academic preparation but is also dependent upon a host of equally important skills, habits, and behaviors."

The authors' recommended approach for modeling and teaching habits of mind include the following:

Focus on students' assets, not deficits.

Create a community.

Engage students.

Build confidence.

Develop students' self-efficacy.

Promote transfer of learning.

Teaching habits of mind requires a deep respect and regard for students. Research found that individual teachers can have a profound effect on students. We need to make students an explicit part of our instructional approach. Students need to see habits of mind in practice. Share with them how you use habits of mind by explaining specific examples with students.



**SHELTON STATE**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACHIEVEMENT AND RESOURCES

*The mission of the SOAR Institute of Shelton State Community College is to provide dedicated support to enhance the success of underprepared students.*

83% of first-time freshmen assigned to a navigator in fall '16 returned for spring '17

## SOAR: Five Years of Providing Service

Since being established in 2011, the SOAR Institute has become a place where students visit for many types of assistance. Tracking how many students visit SOAR is important because it helps staff know what students need and where to invest resources. Analyzing the number of contacts with students provides insight into whether or not students are getting the services they need. The number of visits to the different services in SOAR indicates that students are using the services more and more each year. Below is the total number of student contacts broken down by the type of service.

The SOAR Institute visits listed in the chart reflect the number of student visits to SOAR for reasons other than tutoring, attending class, seeing a navigator for educational planning, or working in the Math Lab. Another note is that the Math Lab opened in fall 2014. The number of first-time freshmen who place into at least one developmental class and are assigned to a navigator has consistently been 2/3 since fall 2011. The total number of students who have met with a navigator since the inception of SOAR is 4,843. The percentage of students who enroll in classes after meeting with a navigator averages 80% during the past five years. This percentage is consistently higher than the national average for students who place into developmental classes, which is 67%. Of students assigned to a navigator as first-time freshmen in fall 2016, 83% enrolled again in

<b>SOAR Institute</b>	100,798
<b>Tutoring</b>	31,408
<b>Math Lab</b>	5,842
<b>Navigators</b>	20,057
<b>Total</b>	<b>158,105</b>

## 2016 Completers Who Took Developmental Classes

Calculations from the past year show that the percentage of SSCC graduates who have taken at least one developmental course is higher than the national average of **28%**, which is reported by the Community College Research Center. Seeing students graduate who have persevered and finished their degree or certificate, especially students who are first generation college students or who have overcome incredible odds, is one of the most rewarding aspects of working at SSCC.

	<b>Number of Graduates</b>	<b>Number That Took Dev. Class</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Number of Dev. Classes Taken</b>
<b>Fall 2016</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>270</b>
<b>Summer 2016</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>171</b>
<b>Spring 2016</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>193</b>

SSCC graduates who took developmental classes is higher than national average.



## ***SOAR Personnel Spotlight***

### ***A Conversation with Anika Lodree***

**What prompted you to apply for this position at Shelton State?** “One day, while sitting at my desk in my home office, I was reflecting on my life and what I wanted to do as a career. At that time, I was a stay-at-home mom and an adjunct instructor at The University of Alabama. My kids were getting older and were excelling in school, so I thought that it was time for me to find something full-time outside of the house. I have a passion for assisting students, mainly underprepared students in mathematics, making sure that they achieve and comprehend mathematical concepts and are able to use these concepts in their everyday lives. In addition, I taught a few intermediate algebra classes at Shelton years ago. The great working environment and community drew me back to SSCC.”

**Where did you work before coming to Shelton State?** “I was an adjunct instructor in the College of Business at the University of Alabama and a math tutor for the University of Alabama Athletics Department.”

**Where did you attend college? What degree have you earned?** “I received a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from Xavier University of Louisiana, a Master of Science in Mathematics from Louisiana State University, and a Ph.D. in Information Science and Learning Technologies from the University of Missouri-Columbia.”

**Tell us where you grew up and what led you to pursue this profession.** “I grew up in New Orleans, LA. Both of my parents have a B.S. in mathematics and are firm believers in the power of education. So I always knew, from the beginning, that I wanted to help underprepared

students who struggle in mathematics become successful in the subject area.”


**Tell us about your family.** “I am married to Emmett Lodree, Jr....18 years and counting. I have three wonderful and very active boys: Emmanuel (15), Aaron (13), and Aeneas ‘A.J.’ (7). One thing that we love to do as a family is to run in 5K races.”

**What are some of your interests and hobbies?** “My hobbies are the three R’s: I love reading, running with the family, and retail therapy. I would love to visit Italy and Hawaii. I am a huge sports fan and would love to tour old ball parks and stadiums, such as Lambeau Field (home of the Green Bay Packers), Wrigley Field (home of the Chicago Cubs), and Fenway Park (home of the Boston Red Sox).”

**What has been the most challenging thing about working at Shelton State?** “The most challenging thing about working in the SOAR Institute is making sure that every student who walks through those doors succeed at Shelton State and in life.”

**What has been the most rewarding thing about working in SOAR?** “The most rewarding thing about working in SOAR is seeing current students excel in their classes and hearing from former students who are successful in their careers.”

**Is there any additional information you would like to share?** “I truly enjoy working with so many wonderful people here at SSCC. The SOAR family is a part of my extended family.”

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Math



## ***SOAR Personnel Spotlight***

### ***A Conversation with Pam Sagan***

**What prompted you to apply for this position at Shelton State?** “I had been working with Work Force Development for about eleven years and felt like I was ready to try something different. I wanted to be more involved with the students and to learn some different skills.”

**Where did you work before coming to Shelton State?** “I worked at Englewood Elementary School in the office and was a substitute teacher.”

**Where did you attend college? What degree have you earned?** “I attended college at Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, Kentucky. I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Family Consumer Sciences. I have also taken classes at Shelton to gain computer skills. After being a stay-at-home mom for many years, I lacked technological skills when I decided to go back to work. While taking classes, I was a work study student for the former SSCC President, Rick Rogers.”

**Tell us where you grew up and what led you to pursue this profession.** “I am originally from Yuma, Arizona. My family moved around a lot while I was growing up. I am so glad to have lived in different places and know people from all over the country. The last place I lived in Arizona was Phoenix. My family moved to Houston, Texas, and then to Cincinnati, Ohio. We went to a small town in northern Ohio. My first year of college was at the University of Akron. My mom and I were freshmen together. It was fun going to college with my mom. I always knew where to find her when I needed money. Next, my family moved to a small town south of Lexington, Kentucky, so I transferred to EKU. I have always worked in education. I started out as a preschool teacher after college and have been involved in education ever since. I really like to see people learn and succeed.”

**Tell us about your family.** “I have three grown sons who are my absolute most favorite people in the world. My oldest son, Grant, works in Birmingham; my middle son, Tyler, is in California; my youngest son, John, is in Atlanta. Nothing makes me happier than when we are all together.”

**What are some of your interests and hobbies?** “I love to travel, especially if it involves going somewhere with my sons or to see them. I love to sew and spend time with my sons, family, and friends.”

**What has been the most challenging thing about working in your current role?** “Learning new things on the computer has been the hardest thing for me to learn in SOAR. Having not grown up with computers, I find myself intimidated by them, so I can really relate to our older students who sometimes struggle. Veronica Cross, SOAR Manager, has been incredibly patient in teaching me new skills.”

**What has been the most rewarding thing about working in SOAR?** “I have really enjoyed getting to know my co-workers in SOAR. Also, I really enjoy helping a student with a problem or helping the older students overcome some of their fears of the computer.”

**Is there any additional information you would like to share?** “Having had the opportunity to live in different places in the country and to travel, I have learned that people are pretty much the same wherever you go. No matter your race or ethnicity, if you live in the north, south, east, or west, we all share the same feelings. I always flinch when I hear people ‘put down’ because they are a northerner, or a southerner, or for any reason. Take the time to get to know someone. The finest people I know live in all parts of this country. Some of those people work here at Shelton.”